THE ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF PHILIP BITES

"He doubled up with joy, both hands across his wide mouth."

By Louise Closser Hale

BATES was his name—we found him out afterward—but 'im being a cockney, we were misled at first by his own admission:

"Yes, ma'am, Philip Bites," he smiled.

We leaped upon the opportunity—we Americans. "You don't look as though you would, Philip." Obvious stuff, one might say.

And at this he smiled again, not that he understood us but that the theatre and its component parts—scenery, properties, even players—stood for unceasing mirth. The fun might be as intangible as American humor, or as plainly delicious as the slapsticks of the clown, but at any rate when one went to see a plye one went to laugh. It never occurred to Philip that he was part of the fun, at least it didn't for a while—but this artistic development is my story.

On the day of our first rehearsal he was conducted through the insignificant door to the gloomy pretentiousness of the London theatre by a bearded man, whose profession it was to seek out children playing along the street and introduce them to the great game of the stage. Many were passed but few were chosen in his amblings through the city; only those whose stunted growth and impoverished appearance bore evidence of their eligibility for the dramatic profession. In England the child actor must be over 10, no matter what his role, and there must be dire necessity in the household before the courts allow him to upset social conditions by supporting his family.

The bearded gentleman admitted to me that his heart jumped up into 'is throat when 'e set eyes on Philip. Though ragged he was rosy, though fully of age he was very short, and, crowning gift to all comedians, nature had atoned for his lack of height by a width of smile.

Further investigation proved that Father Bates was a stone mason—not steady work—none o' that now-a-d'yes—jobs 'ere and there—enough to keep the color in Philip's cheeks for a little while longer yet not enough to make a pound a week and the child's board anything but a tempting proposition. There was some talk from the bearded man of a governess, a lady who would myke a gentleman of 'im before the year was out, but that was put down as pure guff.

So papers were signed at the police court and questions put to Philip, who didn't have to go unless he wished. But the little boy couldn't say fast enough that he wanted to go. And what child who has ever seen the Christmas pantomime, which had once been Philip's portion, would lose the chance to see a pantomime again! "Again," did I weakly say? It would be more than that—the bearded one had spoken—it would be a week of pantomime, a hundred thousand nights of pantomime, and he, Philip, was to receive money, food, washing and—what else was it?—Oh, yes, a whole governess just for attending these performances. Would he go!

The police officer waxed sentimental. "You'll have to leave your mother, Philip," he reminded.

"Plenty more at 'ome," was the cheerful answer.

In that frame of mind he came to us and entered our sedate comedy, still smiling, although he found no fairies, and still under the impression that he was a spectator. I do not know by what gradual process of reasoning he accommodated himself to the fact that he was now in close relationship with the clowns and harlequins and columbines or how he felt about our wearing different day and night time faces. I suppose the situation soaked in unconsciously as a child learns a language. It seemed no blow to him that the scenery wasn't real, although he found it puzzling.

Once I caught him on the stage before the curtain rose eyeing the gay front to my cottage stealthily. It was as though he would rather the cottage didn't know that he was looking. After a minute of this he suddenly darted behind it, hoping he could arrive before the interior had cunningly turned itself into mere canvas and backing. But dash back and forth as he would he could never see the front and the rear at the same time.

With the adaptability of his confreres even this mock display grew natural to him. The chair behind the canvas door represented the interior of a home good enough for anybody and, being slightly compensated, it became his custom to run nightly to my dressing room with the comforting information that "my house was built" when the stage hands had finished setting the scene.

This house of mine served a double purpose during the salad days of Philip's professional career. I could peep out through the window and watch him when he was appearing, quite unconsciously, in the performance ("seeing the plye," he called it) and, when his scene was over, I entertained him "out of his role," within my canvas walls.

A backing, which is a twofold screen, was placed behind the window, thoroughly representing to the audience a wall with paper on it, and affording Philip a sort of seclusion. Most little boys do not court seclusion, nor did he save for a space of time. But there came a week when, in those narrow confines, Philip found his Gethsemane. Found it, endured it, survived it, while I tried not to see.

One day the governess reported that he hadn't eaten. She knew the signs as homesickness, she said, and the disquieting word went round. We had all been homesick in our lives. It is an ailment which forms an early part of the stern early training for the stage. Pennies reached Philip's hand, though knowing the futility of them. He did his little duties; said he wasn't hungry; made no moan.

We talked among ourselves about this sickness which had come so late that the governess had hoped he would not get "it." But there had been much to engage him; the trains; three meals a day; lessons; the governess (who turned out to be a lady, not a cruller, but one was really glad); the glorious playtime at night with the grownups, and the romping playtime by day with the older children. Then it began to pall upon him, for he had not yet learned the consolation of art.

The night following the futile offering of the pennies I made my exit through the canvas door and found that he wasn't there to greet me. My red portfolio lay ready, which he always carried from the dressing room that, during my wait, I might write 'ome. But he was not by my side asking wot I would sye to 'em.

A sound so small and indescribable that it might be termed the heaviness of the silence caused my eyes to rest upon him. He was in the far corner of the screen, sitting on the floor, with his face to the wall. There was no word from him, no cry, beyond a long quiet sob which wouldn't down. But the little shoulders heaved continually, rising and falling, rising and falling.

It was the more grim in that he felt himself securely hidden from us all, yet he was in plain view of the gallery and balcony. Only, the spectators of our merry comedy would never have believed that the amusing little fellow crouching there could be sweating out his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Occasionally he lifted his hand to his face, and I knew that the rain of tears must be terrible. I cried too—all my makeup off—and waved away those who came to ask. Once I went over and made as if to love him, but he shook himself free. Then, fearful that I was hurt, he caught my dress, although he didn't turn. "It's all right, it's all right," he choked.

I went outside to talk ways and means with the others. There were many stage waits that evening. A picnic was devised, which he gently enjoyed, but at night came the fight in his little garden. On the fourth day he asked the governess to go home, and she had sought to quiet him by the formula which had never failed with all her earlier charges. He would be beaten by those at home, beaten if he left and sent his father no more money. "And the God's truth," she had added to me awfully.

To try to dull the terror of that word we filled his day with poor distractions, even his lessons were suspended, but at bedtime he begged that she would send him home—and he would take the beating.

We were mad creatures in the theatre when this news came to us. With our natural intoleration for all moderate measures we decided that one of us should go with him, stay in the house, shield him from punishment, make up the weekly pound among ourselves, "break up the show if necessary" to make Philip Bites himself again.

The manager, a just man, looked at us coldly; the governess asked us to wait. I strode into my canvas shelter, hoping that a sight of Philip would lend me some of his control. He had reached the wiping away stage; the small handkerchief, an implement new to him, was receiving steady employment. It was the period when I dared speak.

"I am sending away money to-night," I whispered to him loudly as I picked up my portfolio.

He came and stood beside me. "Do you send it every week?" he gulped.

"Yes," I answered.

"So do I."

"Then you're a grownup like the rest of us. All the grownups help. Why, you're a regular man." Tentatively I offered him the straw.

Philip caught the straw. The sweetness of responsibility stole over him. "I keep 'em all alive," he lisped.

I blessed the governess for the wisdom of that line to him. "If that's so you're more a man than any of the other actors here. All of them help, but you alone 'keep 'em alive,' Philip."

Knee high, he remained quietly by me while the weight of it settled down upon his little shoulders, never to lift again. But the sobs stopped, he accepted a limedrop and in a few days the smile came back.

Step by step he learned the lessons of the stage which must be suffered—and enjoyed. All but himself he learned, himself and the player's relation to his work. At the first rehearsal he had nearly split his little sides over the antics of the older children in the play. He esteemed it a privilege to be allowed to run upon the stage with them and asked each day if he could go with them again. To be sure he was surprised when Sarah tipped the bench over every time they met upon the stage, but it was a good game and very funny. When the first night came he was not nervous to find that there were people on both sides of the footlights—on the side where he had been when he had seen the panto.

In the first place the newcomers laughed as hard as he did, and somehow the older children with him didn't laugh when Sarah tipped the bench up. They p'tended they were angry. Philip looked out in a friendly way when he heard the first quick roar and, knowing little boys must not be noisy before their betters, he put his hand over his mouth and endeavored to still his own shrill crowing. Those others across the footlights laughed all the louder.

Why should they not, thought Philip; could anything be funnier than Sarah tipping up the bench! He walked down to the proscenium, now doubled up with joy, both hands across his wide mouth. The house, all eyes upon him, rocked with contagious mirth. The stage hands and the actors clustered in the wings. The manager urged them back. "Don't let him see you—he's perfectly unconscious—that's the best of it."

Some time later order was restored and the play continued. Tommy stubbed his toe, Mary broke the jug, Philip put on his hat again when his mother snatched it from his head to teach him manners. It was a piece of business that Philip had been told to do. He did it because he must obey, but there was no significance to Philip in the action, there was no "playing on the action."

"Remarkable," I whispered to the manager, who was peeping through the window with me. "That ought to get a laugh."

He shook his head. "They laugh at him, not at what he does. Until he knows which side the footlights he is on they'll never laugh. He'll sop it up somehow or other—all in good time."

All in good time, Royalty, who had been laying a cornerstone in the town where we were playing, came to the theatre. They were late and the manager uneasily kept the curtain down. The good Briton didn't fear the anger of the audience, which would wait hours complacently for the remotest royal person, nor yet was he concerned with the inconvenience to the company. It was the vision of the man with the little star on his cap which rose before him, the "children's man," who always came when he was mightily not wanted, to see to it that the juveniles had left the theatre before the hands of his watch pointed to half past 10.

He was a kindly man of the same type in every city, but the law of England is not to be dodged or bought off with a draught of ale. When he of the little star was seen about word came back from the keeper of the door and the governess rushed her family to the street, boots unfastened, coats flying, that the officer of the juvenile court might find them on the sidewalk before the hour had struck.

To-night they would be late unless they hurried through their scene. "You must be quick," the manager admonished them, keen not to lose the children's license. "Everything you say, everything you do must be quicker. Understand, Philip?"

"Yes, sir," said Philip, smiling at the joyful possibilities of racing with the others through all the games. He too would help.

His little bowed legs described rapid semicircles as he ran. He assisted Tommy when he stubbed his toe, he scooped aside the broken jug. All his duties, as he called them, he dashed through with great celerity. Even he put on his cap the second, the very second mother turned her back, as though he felt as though the audience felt there would be very little time for all this naughtiness, lest mother might turn round again.

Then a wonderful thing happened; a laugh shot up from the house—a laugh they hadn't counted on—a "new" laugh—and the play weeks old!

The mother turned to look at Philip, but by then his hat was off again—the children looked at him.

For an instant he stared out at the audience, bewildered. It was not the tipping bench at which they laughed. It was not the broken jug. It was—the color ran over his face—it was his cap, the business with the cap, his work which they applauded. He swam around the stage in a sea of bliss. For some beautiful reason or other they had laughed at him!

But alas! there was more to learn.

For two weeks Philip put on his cap quickly, easily, and scored his point. Then one night it must have come to him, in simpler phrasing, that he might squeeze a little more response out of that business if—well, if he could work it up a bit. Philip pulled his cap down over his left eye. It was Saturday, and he reaped a harvest of guffaws from pit and gallery. The sound was music in his ears.

Night after night he worried that poor cap. Over both eyes it went, over both ears, down to his nose, even engulfing his mouth. Delighted with himself, his ears were muffled to the decreasing laughter. Then on one sad occasion his face disappeared entirely, and listening through the window for Philip's laugh, I heard it not. I peeped out and saw—with the audience—a smart Alec of a little boy engaged in overacting.

Once more a flush came over Philip's face, and his mouth quivered. He had lost it, that sweet applause, and he had given them his best, "me brain, me personality, me soul."

For a week he tried to force the laugh, as we have often done ourselves. Every inhuman way that a small boy could don a cap he tried. The audience were politely bored. He glared at them, he'd make 'em laugh. But they did not heed him. At one performance he laughed aloud as he went through the mechanism. Vague thoughts, familiar to us all, of outlining to the fools just what they ought to do must have passed through his baby mind. The fools would not be taught.

At last, baffled and quite confused with the vagaries of this capricious world, Philip gave up the laugh. He was just a little boy again, a little boy getting what reflected fun he could from the fun of others. Mother tossed the cap into his lap, turning up stage, and Philip put it on quickly, simply, to get it over with.

And the laugh came back—the beautiful mellow sound from the throats of the men and women who make or mar us quite. But Philip, even through his shy happiness, put up his hand to find just where that cap was resting on his head. Then he was surprised some more, for it was perching there quite ordinarily, where the cap would be of any little boy playing in the street—instead of on the stage.

"In the far corner of the scene with his face to the wall."

Cake Hints

FOR those who would excel in cake making these admonitions are offered.

First—Cream the shortening.

Second—Add sugar slowly and cream it again.

Third—Add yolks of eggs well beaten.

Fourth—Mix and sift the dry ingredients.

Fifth—Add the dry materials to the mixture, which has the baking powder in it; alternate flour and liquid.

Sixth—Cut and fold in (do not beat or stir) the whites of eggs which are beaten to a dry stiff froth.

Seventh—Have fire and pans ready. Put the cake into the oven quickly; remember that the oven can wait, but the cake never. Bake according to rule.

To test the oven heat—A hot oven will brown flour in five minutes; or you can try if you can hold the hand in it and count twenty.

Time of baking—Layer cakes, 20 or 25 minutes; loaf cakes, from 40 to 80 minutes; gem cakes, from 20 minutes to half an hour.

Never bang the oven door. The cake will fall if you do.

Reveals Mormons' Methods of Luring Converts

Continued from Twelfth Page.

taken from them. Such was the feeling aroused that the Mormons found difficulty in renting any hall in which to meet. Almost every newspaper in England printed more or less of Joseph F. Smith's testimony, wherein he admitted that he was living in polygamy, that he was a criminal and that he violated the direct commands of God to him as it suited his convenience! Whatever impetus the election of Smoot had given to Mormon missions in England and whatever impression it had made in regard to the non-practice of polygamy was swept away in the publicity given to this sworn testimony of the head of the Mormon Church in the Smoot trial.

"About three years ago the London *Daily Express* published a letter of protest from a passenger on the steamship Laurentic, signed by the chaplain of the ship, A. P. Hayes, and six other persons on the ship, against the propaganda of the Mormons on this ship. Here is a copy of the letter—'a party of about forty aboard, half of whom are young girls between the ages of 16 and 22, ostensibly on the way to Utah'—'The girls are afraid to be seen speaking to any other than a Mormon, and are completely under the control of these scoundrels'—'These young girls are being lured on to destruction, and every one on board is alive to the fact that it is nothing less than white slavery under the thin disguise of a fanciful religion.'

"We secured an affidavit from Z. Brewell of Lawton, Pudsey, England, which told this same story, but from the inside point of view, for he had gone to America with a similar party of converts. He went, with his little boy, because his daughter had gone to Utah some months before and wrote to him such discouraging letters that he believed that she was homesick and blue and seeing 'Zion' in the wrong light, and he wanted to join her, and to see the place that had been pictured to him as the most desirable place this side of heaven when he was converted as a member of the Mormon Church.

"He declared—here is a copy of the affidavit—that the eye opening process began from the time the party set sail from Liverpool for Utah. 'On board our vessel,' he states, 'were about one hundred Mormons, all bound for Utah. Seventeen of them were elders of the church, and most of the others were women and girls collected from all parts of Europe. The married elders seized the opportunity for having a gay time with the girls, and all their pretexts of morality were thrown to the winds—I saw things which I blush to relate. The ship's passengers talked about their conduct, so that the leader of the band was obliged to call the elders together and admonish them to be decent.' 'Had it been possible I think I should have turned back on my arrival in America, but I determined to see the matter through, and on my arrival in Salt Lake City I found my worst fears confirmed. Polygamy is being practised to a great extent. There is no attempt to deny it in Utah. It is only when the elders come to Great Britain that they deny it. Of course there is no legal marriage. These extra wives are only spiritual wives, but they have children like the legal wives. As soon as I was able to make the necessary financial arrangements I returned with my family to Pudsey. The Mormons had preceded me with vile stories, but I was too well known in my native town and my old employer immediately returned me to my old position under him.'

"Our campaign in England flooded the Home Secretary with resolutions adopted at these meetings asking for Mormon expulsion, placing signed statements before him. The newspapers took up the matter vigorously, and the Archbishop of Canterbury and his Under Bishops were our strongest supporters in asking the Government to make thorough investigation. Mr. Winston Churchill wrote me through his secretary, J. F. Moylan, that investigations were being made through the foreign office of the American Ambassador and through the police forces all over England. We were informed at the Home Office that police reports confirmed the cases laid before the Home Secretary in affidavit form and that Mr. Churchill was deferring action until he should receive a reply from the American Government. What the reply was I never been able to find out; but what was our consternation to see by the newspapers the stroke of Mormon policy and social statecraft by which the Mormon Tabernacle choir of Salt Lake City was invited to sing at the White House.

"Naturally the English Government could not be expected to antagonize a Power whose representatives were entertained at the White House by the President of the United States. But not for a moment do I believe that the then President could have realized what depended on this simple act of courtesy to these Utah singers!

"We spent some time in Holland and Denmark. Holland, the land of religious toleration, cannot expel Mormons under present laws, but there is but slight advance in Mormon missions there, and some time recently the Dutch Government placed in the newspapers a warning that any one approached by the Mormon agents would do well to inquire at police headquarters.

"The Indra mission of Denmark has established a mission church in Salt Lake City. It is a place of refuge to all who wish to escape from the Mormon fold and renew relations with the mother church in Denmark. In addition to this the Danish Government has established a consulate in Salt Lake City to look after the welfare of Danes who, having been deceived by Mormonism, may seek aid and advice.

"The Dutch Minister of Justice and the Minister of Church and State in Denmark expressed the same opinion of the proper way to solve the difficulty; they stated that it would simplify matters for their Governments if the American Government would call attention to the fact that the Mormons are practising polygamy and that it would meet the approval of Washington if Mormons were denied admittance to these countries for proselyting purposes! In other words, if America wished to nurse the serpent we couldn't expect Europe to kill it by cutting off its tail!

"And then, having gone through all these experiences, when I walked into a New York theatre because I heard they were playing a drama about polygamy there and listened to 'the report of Brother Rush from England' as to 'the atoning of the Mormon mission houses,' and 'the expulsion of Mormon missionaries from Germany' and 'the removal of the offending immigration commissioner' of Boston—why, I couldn't keep still. My wife and I want to shout the truth from the housetops. The play is true. It is being lived to-day. There are hundreds like my mother, whose heartbreak and hard labor and humiliation have built up a kingdom for the prophet. And they're coming still, the poor peasant girls of Europe with their eyes turned toward Zion, the Mormon recruits!

"There's another side to the story, the propaganda in America; but the papers are already telling that. Only I want to tell you that since the war in Europe propaganda in England and America has been more active than ever and the menace greater."

Unequal Consciences

"WEALTH, as we know," said Mr. Gwimpleton, "is very unevenly distributed, but conscience is more so.

"Some men are overburdened with conscience; some have none at all. Some people worry themselves sick over this or that real or imagined transgression of the civil or the moral law.

"There are others who worry only that they cannot safely transgress the more.

"Between these two extremes we have the man commonly described as overconscientious, meaning one worthy but timid, who lets a conscience too keen and active keep him from betterments of his fortune that he might otherwise compass. Then we have those people who are not troubled in such ways, who are all but conscienceless and whose conscience really lies dormant.

"It is true, too, that a thing that may stir one man's conscience may not touch another's; we are differently constituted. There appears to be no absolutely definite standard of conscience applicable to and actuating all men alike. This enormously complicates the conscience situation.

"But still the great primary difficulty lies in the uneven distribution of conscience. If we could only have something like an even distribution of such conscience as now exists it would, for one thing, in some measure reduce piracy in its manifold forms as now practised under existing conditions by men without conscience; and for another thing, it would, by reducing the stock of the man with abnormal conscience spare him the detriments that now beset him and let him take without qualms whatever benefits rightfully belong to him. In fact, a more even distribution of conscience would tone up the world generally and make it in many ways a vastly more comfortable world to live in.

"Pending that happy day it behooves us, I suppose—at any rate my friend MacBlink, a well meaning and cheerful but not always overwise man, says it does—to be still more or less wary in our dealings with our fellow man in order to avoid subjecting our well meaning but weaker brother to undue temptation and to avoid being circumvented by somebody who was perhaps overlooked entirely in the conscience distribution."